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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Opportunities for farm ownership...Wyoming

Washington

1931

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
RAY LYMAN WILBUR, Secretary

Opportunities for Farm Ownership

on the

Riverton Irrigation Project

Wyoming

ELWOOD MEAD
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation

308
Z
Box 334

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1931

Further information regarding farms on the Riverton project may be secured from the following:

Dr. ELWOOD MEAD, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D. C.

H. D. COMSTOCK, Superintendent, Riverton project, Riverton, Wyo.

HUGH A. BROWN, Director of Reclamation Economics, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D. C.

A. C. JOHNSON, Vice President, Chicago & North Western Railway Co., Chicago, Ill.

VAL KUSKA, Colonization Agent, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Co., Omaha, Nebr.

L. L. NEWTON, Executive Manager, Department of Commerce and Industry, Cheyenne, Wyo.

SECRETARY, Riverton Chamber of Commerce, Riverton, Wyo.

RIVERTON FEDERAL IRRIGATION PROJECT

INFORMATION FOR INTENDING SETTLERS ON THE RIVERTON PROJECT, WYO.

LOCATION OF PROJECT

THE Riverton project is located in Fremont County, Wyo., on the ceded portion of the Wind River Indian Reservation. It lies near the center of the Wind River Basin, at a distance of 9 to 30 miles north and northwest of Riverton, the nearest railroad point, a modern town of 1,500 people on the Chicago & North Western Railway. Pavillion, a small town with electric lights and a supply of excellent water, lies in the northwest part of the project at a distance of 25 miles from Riverton. Staple supplies of all sorts can be purchased here. It has daily mail service from Riverton.

Riverton may be reached directly by train on the Chicago & North Western Railway or by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad to Bonneville, Wyo., thence by regular automobile stage, a distance of about 3 miles to Shoshoni and from this point to Riverton by the Chicago & North Western Railway. The stages connect with the Chicago & North Western Railway at Shoshoni, and with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad at Bonneville.

Those desiring to make the trip to Riverton by automobile will find excellent roads throughout the year. The Riverton project, the Yellowstone National Park, and the Shoshone project can be included in a convenient trip. This journey may be taken by going through the Shoshone project (headquarters at Powell, Wyo.), thence to Cody, and entering the Yellowstone National Park at its east entrance. The park may be left from the south entrance, passing Jackson Lake and the Teton Mountains en route to Riverton, joining the main highway again at Shoshoni. Some may desire to reverse this trip by inspecting the Riverton project first and leaving the park by the east entrance, passing through the Shoshone project en route home. This will be merely a matter of choice.

ENGINEERING WORKS AND IRRIGABLE AREA

The water for the project is diverted from Wind River by a concrete diversion dam, about 35 miles above Riverton, into the Wyoming Canal, which has a capacity of 2,200 second-feet. The Riverton

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project is entitled to a large portion of the natural flow of Wind River, which holds up unusually well during the late summer, as its source is in the perpetual snow banks, glaciers, and natural lakes of the Wind River Mountains. The Pilot Butte Reservoir, with a capacity of 30,000 acre-feet, has been completed.

These main irrigation features are built large enough to supply irrigation water to 100,000 acres, which it is estimated will be the area of the project when completed. In 1930 and previous years water has been available for about 20,000 acres, and starting in 1931, is available for a total of about 32,000 acres. Additional land will be opened for settlement and irrigation as the demand for such land develops. Water will be delivered to each farm. It is planned to construct the necessary drainage system for the land as a part of the irrigation system as this need becomes manifest.

PUBLIC LAND AVAILABLE

There now remain unentered about 40 farm units of public land which were opened to entry some time ago. These farms are located from 6 miles southwest to 10 miles southeast of Pavillion in the northwestern part of the project. The 90-day preference right of ex-service men to enter these farms has expired, and they may be taken by any qualified applicants regardless of military service.

On May 1, 1931 there were opened for entry, 50 additional farm units of public land lying south and east of Lost Wells Butte about 10 miles north of Riverton. Any farms remaining unassigned after August 3, 1931, can be taken by properly qualified applicants regardless of military service. Additional public land will be opened from time to time to meet the demand.

The land was formerly a part of the Wind River Indian Reservation and each entryman must pay $1.50 an acre for the gross area of his farm. Of this cost 50 cents an acre must be paid at the time of making entry and 25 cents an acre a year thereafter for four years.

HOW TO OBTAIN A FARM

Those desiring to settle on public land at Riverton should request an application blank from the Superintendent, Riverton Project, Riverton, Wyo., or from the Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D. C. Each question asked should be fully answered, and the application transmitted to the superintendent at Riverton, where it will be considered by an examining board appointed for the purpose of considering the fitness of applicants to undertake the development of an irrigated farm.

Applicants to qualify must have at least $2,000 in cash, or in livestock, farming equipment, or other useful assets. An applicant must have had at least two years' experience in farming, preferably, though not necessarily, under irrigation conditions and must furnish satisfactory evidence of character and industry.

He must also be a qualified homestead entryman.

All applicants must appear before the examining board and also look over the land before they can be finally accepted. However, the board will examine applications received by mail and advise the applicants whether it is likely that they can be accepted. The board is nearly always available and will meet applicants at their convenience as far as possible.

The purpose of this selective procedure above described is to eliminate those prospective settlers who through lack of health, experience, or financial backing are unlikely to succeed and are more apt to lose their investment of time and money and to insure as far as may be that the settlers who do take land will make good.

The employees of the Bureau of Reclamation at Riverton will assist settlers in making satisfactory choices of farms. They may be relied upon to give practical advice, based on a knowledge of local conditions.

PRIVATE LAND AVAILABLE

About 70 per cent of the Riverton project is public land. The remainder is privately owned, but very little is developed. Those who are not qualified homestead entrymen or who prefer to purchase land already patented will find private land for sale at $10 to $15 an acre, depending on the location and quality of the land and the desire of the owner to sell. The project superintendent at Riverton, Wyo., will, on request, endeavor to put prospective purchasers in touch with owners who wish to sell and will supply accurate information regarding individual tracts.

HOME SEEKERS' RATES

Prospective settlers should make inquiry of the railroads concerning reduced homeseekers' rates for passenger fares and transportation of household goods and equipment to the project, or the project superintendent will, on request, obtain such information.

CLIMATIC, SOIL, AND CROP CONDITIONS

The average annual maximum temperature is about 95° F., the average annual minimum about −30° F., and the average mean annual temperature about 43° F. The mean annual rainfall is about 9 inches.

The average period between latest and earliest killing frosts is 140 days, or from about May 10 to about September 27. The altitude above sea level varies from 4,700 to 5,550 feet.

The soil varies from a sandy loam to clay loam, and both types of soil will be found on many farms. The heavier soils usually carry a

growth of salt sage and the lighter ones a black sage. This black sage is seldom grubbed, but after the land has been plowed the brush is raked and burned or the sagebrush is sometimes removed by dragging a railroad rail over the land before plowing. The lighter soils contain no alkali; the heavier ones contain a little soluble white alkali, but rarely enough to injure crops. Tracts which were known to contain an excessive amount of alkali or were thought to be difficult to drain if they become seeped have been eliminated from the irrigable area, as were patches of light sandy soil. Soil and climate conditions are well adapted for the production of alfalfa, sweet clover, hard and soft wheat, oats, barley, corn, beans, seed peas, potatoes, sugar beets, garden vegetables, small fruits, and melons. This is best evidenced by the success with which these crops are produced under similar conditions under older neighboring irrigation systems, such as in the Riverton Valley, and by very successful gardens at Pavillion and Wind River diversion dam. Wheat is of fine quality and averages 25 to 30 bushels per acre. Oats weighing 40 pounds per bushel average 40 to 50 bushels per acre, and barley weighing 52 pounds per bushel averages about the same. Acclimated corn of suitable varieties regularly matures and produces good yields. Excellent crops of potatoes, especially the red varieties, are produced. Until better railroad facilities are available it will not be feasible to raise sugar beets on the Riverton project. This, no doubt, will be one of the chief crops when such facilities are provided. The sugar content in beets produced in this locality is unusually high, causing beets to bring a correspondingly higher price per ton. Berries and garden vegetables, especially tomatoes, are highly successful, both as to yield and quality.

CROP UTILIZATION AND MARKETS

The project is surrounded on three sides by excellent range on which large numbers of cattle and sheep are run. Experience proves that the systematic feeding of ewes, lambs, and baby beef, if properly handled over a period of years, is uniformly successful. In many cases, a small band of sheep can be profitably kept on the farm. Hogs can be raised and fattened on corn and barley or, if preferred, they can be shipped at about the same price per pound to eastern points for feeding when weighing about 125 pounds each. Hog cholera is unknown. Wyoming does not as yet supply sufficient dairy products for her own needs. With irrigated pasture and plenty of home-grown forage, an excellent opportunity for dairying exists. A well-equipped creamery at Riverton offers a cash market for all cream produced and will pay transportation charges on such cream if sent by stage.

Local production fails to supply the Wyoming demand for eggs and chickens. About 10 carloads of turkeys are shipped annually

from Fremont County. These turkeys grade high and always command a top price. With proper care, turkeys should be a satisfactory side line on every farm. Several carloads of fine honey are shipped each year from the country and the keeping of bees can accompany the necessary production of alfalfa and sweet clover.

After the project is well under development, the agricultural program should be based on the production of forage crops for feeding of milch cows and sheep, hogs, and beef cattle, and the culture of sugar beets and potatoes, with seed crops, cereals, poultry, bees, vegetables, and small fruits as side lines.

Fair to good crops of small grain and potatoes can be raised on raw land, depending on local conditions and the skill with which the land is farmed. The soil as a rule contains very little humus, and it is advisable to seed alfalfa or sweet clover as early as possible, either with or without a nurse crop, and plow one cutting under the second year. Sweet clover is recommended for this crop, as it costs less for seed, a stand is more easily secured, its feeding value is nearly equal to and fertilizing value is fully twice that of alfalfa, and the soil yields more readily to cultivation after the crop has been plowed under.

Every new settler should have a few chickens and one milch cow as soon as he establishes residence, and additional cows, pigs, and chickens as soon as forage is available.

To obtain the best returns from many crops, such as potatoes, beans, vegetables, fruits, and poultry products, it will be necessary for the settlers to concentrate on a few standard varieties and institute systematic and rigid grading. For this purpose cooperative marketing associations are essential. Four such organizations already exist covering turkeys, wool, potatoes, and beans. These organizations have been instrumental in materially increasing net prices to the producers, in improving quality of the products, in enforcing standard grading, and even more important in finding markets when individual growers were unable to do so.

The best wholesale markets of the Riverton project are Omaha and Denver. The prices of wheat, oats, barley, and corn are governed by local conditions and are seldom much less than the Omaha prices. Corn is usually fed by the grower. Fat livestock is shipped to Casper, where there is a modern packing plant, or to Omaha or Denver. Large numbers of cattle and sheep are shipped annually from the surrounding range to Nebraska and Colorado for feeding. The feeding of this stock locally should absorb the forage produced on the Riverton project. The railroad and the oil and mining towns of central and southern Wyoming offer a large market for dairy and poultry products and vegetables.

TRANSPORTATION

The State highway from Riverton to Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone Park runs along the southwest boundary of the project. An excellent 7 miles of graded road conneets Pavillion with this highway. The land for which water is now available joins this highway and all lies within 10 miles of it and is from 9 to 25 miles from Riverton. Other roads traverse the project and will be further improved as settlement increases. It will not be difficult to construct a branch of either the Chicago & North Western or Burlington Railroad through the heart of the project, and it is believed that such a branch will be built as soon as settlement justifies such construction. At present, the Chicago & North Western Railway passes through Riverton to Lander, Wyo., and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy passes within a few miles of the lower end of the project.

DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY

Excellent soft water was obtained at Pavillion at a depth of 340 feet. The same or similar flow has been tapped elsewhere on the project. About 10 wells have been drilled at various points on the project recently and none has failed to reach water within 350 feet. Five of these struck water within 135 feet. Some of the water contains a little soda, but not enough to impair its value for stock or to make it seriously objectionable for house use. As irrigation increases seepage streams will appear which will be available for stock use. Cisterns and reservoirs can be filled with ditch water if desired. The drilling of wells for domestic water supply offers an excellent opportunity for cooperation between neighboring settlers.

COST OF WATER FOR IRRIGATION

Under the contract between the Government and the Midvale irrigation district which will eventually cover all the irrigable land on the project, the cost of the water right will be repaid in 40 annual installments beginning on December 31, 1935, and ending on December 31, 1974. The first of these payments will be 1 per cent of the total, gradually increasing to 5 per cent in 1973. It is estimated that the actual cost per acre will be $90 including delivery of water to each farm and the cost of such drainage as may be found necessary. In no case will the settler repay to the Government more than the actual cost without interest. If considered from an investment standpoint it will be found that approximately $28 invested at 6 per cent interest on January 1, 1935, will be sufficient to liquidate all of the payments on the $90 per acre water right. For example, the total construction charges on a 40-acre farm unit at $90 per acre would amount to $3,600, to be paid over a period of 40 years. If the owner of this unit would

invest $28 per acre or $1,120 at 6 per cent interest, the proceeds plus the investment would be ample to retire all the payments on the $3,600 water-right contract.

Water will be delivered in 1931 and 1932 on a rental basis on payment in advance of $1 per irrigable acre which will entitle the settler to 2 acre-feet of water for each dollar. Payment of the charge for 1931 must be made when the application is accepted and payment for 1932 is due on May 1, 1932, or if the payment is accepted after June 15, it will be applied as the minimum payment for the following year and any water used during the current season will be paid for at the rate of 50 cents per acre-foot. Water in addition to that covered by the minimum payment will be delivered at 50 cents per acre-foot payable on December 1.

The irrigation district will make a maintenance levy of not exceeding $1.50 per acre for use in 1933, 1934, and 1935. It is expected that the district will take over the operation and maintenance of the project on December 31, 1934, and after that date the maintenance levy will be sufficient to cover the actual cost to the district.

COST OF FUEL AND OTHER MATERIALS

A good grade of lignite coal is sold at Riverton at $8 per ton in lump size. A similar coal can be obtained at wagon mines from 1 to 10 miles off the project at $5 per ton. There is opportunity for settlers to cut poles and fence posts for their own use on the neighboring mountains when they are not busy on the farm.

The cost at Riverton, Wyo., in 1926 for other materials and farming equipment commonly required by farmers is as follows:

Oregon fir lumber	per M	$40.00
Shingles	do	4.25
Vertical grain flooring	do	65.00
Battens	100 feet	1.50
Fence posts, cedar	each	.24
Fence posts, steel	do	.50
3-ply roofing	100 square feet	3.75
2-ply roofing	do	3.25
Staples and nails	pound	.07
Cement (paper)	sack	1.00
Barb-wire fence, black	80-rod spool	4.00
Lignite coal at mine 10 miles northwest Pavilion	ton	5.00
Alfalfa in stack	do	6.00–10.00
Oats at farm	hundredweight	1.00– 1.50
Work harness	set	65.00–80.00
Farm wagon with box		190.00
Farm truck with box		150.00
Disk harrow		62.00
Spiked-tooth harrow, 2-section		27.00
Walking plow. 12-inch		23.00
Sulky plow, 14-inch		65.00

Mowing machine	$100.00
Horse rake	62.00
Cultivator, 1-horse	11.50
Drill	140.00
Stacker	150.00
Binder	270.00
Manure spreader	190.00
Grindstone	15.00
Endgate seeder	30.00
Cream separator	110.00
Martin ditcher	80.00
Cook stove	45.00
No. 12 Hot Blast heating stove	20.00
Slip scraper	15.00

COST OF LIVESTOCK

Work horses can be purchased locally for $60 to $75 each; milch cows, $60; sows, $20; hens, 75 cents; and sheep, $7. These are selling prices for grade animals in 1931.

EMPLOYMENT

The Maverick Springs oil field 25 miles northwest of the project has proven production second in Wyoming only to the famous Salt Creek field. There are several other good oil prospects within 30 miles. The Maverick Springs field and perhaps others will probably be developed within a few years. This development will offer opportunity for off-season employment and an additional market for farm products.

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

A 3-room modern schoolhouse has been completed recently at Pavillion. Part of the project is in the Riverton school district which maintains a standard high school fully equipped. Both the Pavillion and Riverton districts operate school buses for the benefit of pupils living at a distance from school. One church building has been erected at Pavillion and ministers of other denominations hold services there as frequently as the attendance justifies. There are six church organizations at Riverton. The Bureau of Reclamation maintains telephone connections with neighboring towns over its own lines. These lines are available for private calls at established toll rates. Pin space on the poles is available for rental for farmers' associations.

RECREATION

Some of the best big-game hunting and fishing in the United States lies from 15 to 100 miles from the project. Scenic and recreational attractions of the surrounding mountains are unexcelled. The

National Yellowstone Park and the Teton Mountains are within one day's automobile travel of the project.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

The local employees of the Bureau of Reclamation at Riverton and Pavillion are always ready and willing to cooperate with the settlers in promoting their welfare. The county agricultural agent located at Lander, 35 miles distant, will gladly render all possible assistance to the new settler in arranging his farm program and in assisting the farmers to organize needed cooperative enterprises. The Smith-Hughes teacher of vocational agriculture in the Riverton high school can also be of service, and the assistance of the technical staff of the agricultural department of the University of Wyoming is also available.

Lined section of the Wyoming Canal, below Pilot Butte power plant

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INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

Mowing machine	$100. 00
Horse rake	62. 00
Cultivator, 1-horse	11. 50
Drill	140. 00
Stacker	150. 00
Binder	270. 00
Manure spreader	190. 00
Grindstone	15. 00
Endgate seeder	30. 00
Cream separator	110. 00
Martin ditcher	80. 00
Cook stove	45. 00
No. 12 Hot Blast heating stove	20. 00
Slip scraper	15. 00

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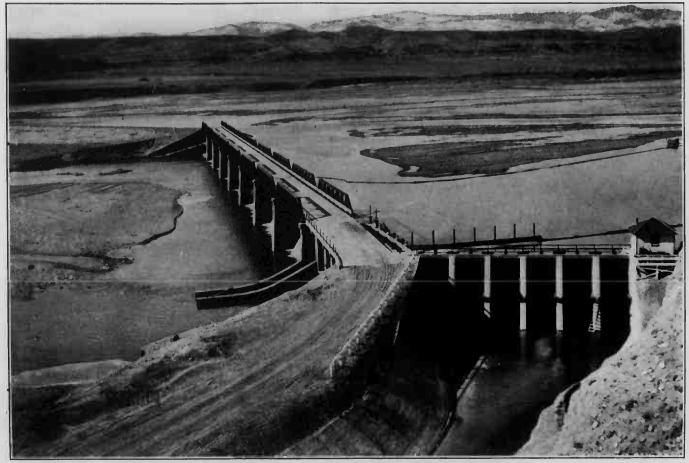
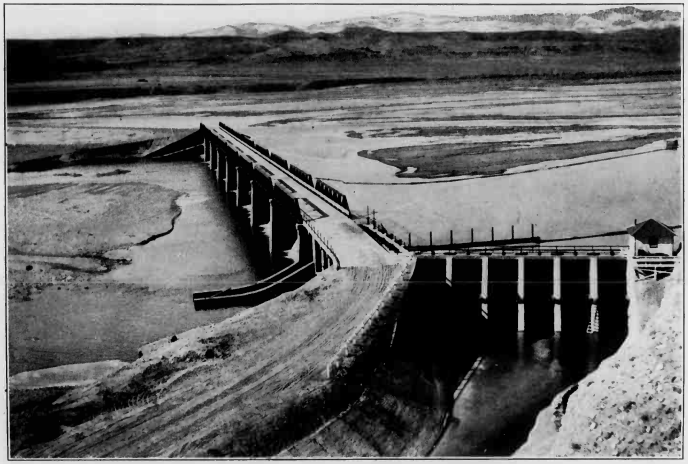
Lined section of the Wyoming Canal, below Pilot Butte power plant



Wind River diversion dam, Riverton project, Wyoming

MSH 24382

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE



Wind River diversion dam, Riverton project, Wyoming

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